

KEEPING ANGORA RABBITS

Lee, E. M.

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P A S T I M E O C C U P A T I O N S .

KEEPING ANGORA RABBITS.

by

E. M. LEE

July, 1942.

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This is a description of the possible co-ordination of an existing pastime and hobby with a 19th century handicraft and of the extensions spreading out therefrom.

Four months ago I purchased two doe Angora rabbits and one buck - pedigree stock. Their hutches were inexpensively constructed from oddments and they were fed on garden and hedge-row plants supplemented by household waste.

They bred in their usual prolific fashion and in due course presented me with 17 baby Angoras.

From the adults I clipped quite a quantity of lovely white silky wool and set about finding means by which it could be spun into yarn. It is quite ready when cut, for spinning, without further treatment!

Imported spinning wheels are expensive, but a hunt round various "junk" shops and chain stores produced various pieces capable of adaptation to the construction of a serviceable "wheel". Plans and particulars of this are attached on a separate sheet.

From this basis a number of interesting occupations for our handicapped friends could be evolved.

- i) A communal club activity for men with a little sight
- the construction of hutches out of odd materials.

Apropos of this one of the men in my district, in the North West L.C.C. area, handled tools for the first time since losing his sight, in the endeavour to construct a hutch to house the baby Angora I had given him. He succeeded well and the effort has noticeably increased his self-confidence and morale.

- ii) Another communal activity for men with a little sight
- piecing together spinning wheels.

This would encourage manual dexterity and the self-confidence of accomplishment.

- iii) A home activity for all who are fond of animals -
the care and breeding of one, or many, Angoras.

In addition to feeding, (on otherwise waste foods) these require a daily clean out also brushing and grooming to keep their coats free from knots and dirt. (N.B. sad to say mine don't get much of this!). They are sweet tempered and tame.

animals and repay attention with a beautiful appearance and yield of wool. (See book attached "The Angora Rabbit"). This yield continues for years and can be sold if desired direct to a wholesaler and for the longest and best grades at round about 30/- per pound. Each rabbit, especially the bucks, should yield about $\frac{3}{4}$ pound per annum.

iv) A home or club, activity for all - the spinning of angora wool into yarn.

This is a simple and restful occupation and an expert can spin 250 yards of yarn from one ounce of wool. This is used in single strand for machines and double strand for hand work. (See book attached - "The hand spinning of Angora Wool".) Wool properly spun does not shed hairs.

v) The knitting or weaving of garments, beautiful, light and warm, from the yarn produced. There is a greater demand for these than supply.

From these activities numbers of others related to them could be introduced. For instance:-

- a) Breeding of fur type of rabbit for flesh and pelt.
- b) Curing these pelts at home or club.
- c) Putting together fur mittens, gloves, toys or slippers.

Club talks could include the wild plants useful as rabbit food and specimens could be passed round for handling.

The search in urban or rural areas for these foods would encourage the taking of necessary exercise. An interest in simple botany might be aroused and talks given on this, extending in due course to the recognition and properties of herbs and the uses of vegetable dyes. It is more interesting to know that Dandelion is an aperient than just that it should not be given in quantity alone to rabbits. An ounce of wool dyed with vegetable dye would be interesting to those with a measure of sight. The back garden and its cultivation might become more interesting and ~~it~~ is not necessary to enumerate the many sidelines possible here.

The chief value of pastime occupation is its power to educate, by drawing out and by steps linked together, gradually to widen the sphere and interests of the blind one until he has so much to do he has no time to be depressed or lonely nor to transform the effects of his handicap into bad temper or "awkwardness" instead of supplementing them into accomplishment.

With the Club Leader, the Home Visitor could materially aid in the introduction of the above mentioned pastimes. Often these two are the only persons in the blind ones immediate environment who understand the cause of unpleasant character manifestations and the remedy.

(Signed) E. M. LEE.

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BOOKS ON RABBITS

and kindred matters.

Rabbits for Food by C. H. Williams	6d.
Handspinning of Angora Wool published by Walmoughs, London	6d.
The Angora Rabbit published by Walmoughs, London	2/s
Green foods for Rabbits published by Walmoughs, London	2/8d.
Books on vegetable dyes	Libraries.
Home dressing of Furs published by Walmoughs, London	4d.
Angora Wool Production published by Walmoughs, London	2/6d.

FOODS SUITABLE FOR RABBITS.

Clover	Knapweed
Cloavers	Hogweed
Agrimony	Plaintains
Cabbage	Shepherds Purse
Coltsfoot	Mallow
Dandelion	Mayweed
Deadnettle	Sow Thistle
Groundsel	Hop Trefoil
Hawkweed	Birdsfoot Trefoil
Cow Parsley	Yarrow
	Dock (Leaves only)

FOODS DANGEROUS TO RABBITS.

Aconite	Corn Cockle
Arum	Dog Mercury
Cuckoopint	Foxglove
Anemone	Hemlock
Buttercup	Bluebell
Byrony	Iris
Nightshade	Marigold
Wild Orchid	Poppy
Bindweed	Pimpernel
Celandine	Toadflax
Clematis	Antirrhinum
	Henbane

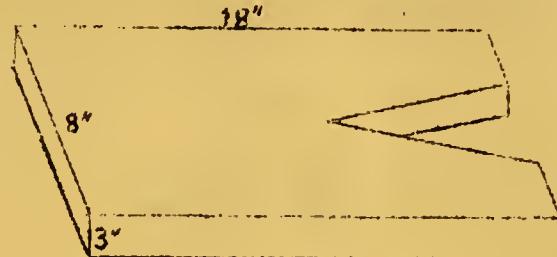
SPINNING WHEELS.

(See page 29 of "The Angora Rabbit").

A general idea of the necessary parts and lay-out can be obtained by this sketch in the book.

The following were my adapted pieces - culled from junk shops.

Block - wood 18" x 8" x 3" thick hard wood. V cut in end slightly longer than $\frac{1}{2}$ diameter of large wheel.



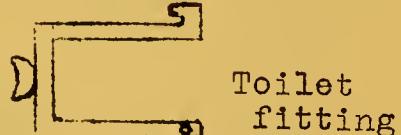
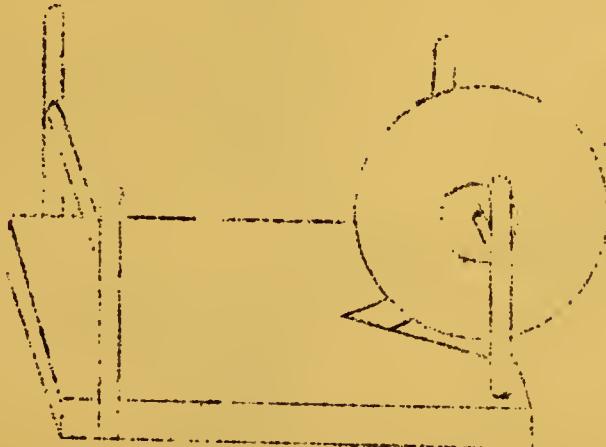
Large Wheel. A push-chair wheel with rubber tyre removed. Cost 1/s.

Pulley for Treadle. A wooden wheel 3" in diameter - 3d. and with a groove, attached to spokes of wheel and one spindle through both it and the large wheel.

Spindle and supports. Two chair spokes with a hole drilled in each upper end to take spindle tightly - wheels to run loosely on it - blocks to keep wheel in centre - cotton reels. Spokes are set in holes drilled in V end of block. The height must give the wheel clearance. Spindle - a piece of curtain rod. The flier and spindle at the other end.



Similar chair spoke supports with a piece of wood nailed across takes flier fitting which is the support part of a toilet roll fitting from Woolworths. The toilet roll fitting is screwed to the piece of wood crossing the two back spokes.



The Flier - a semicircular piece of wood, as shown in book, is fixed to a spindle tightly and the spindle runs in the toilet roll fitting.

The Bobbin - a reel or such like is fitted semi-tightly on the spindle and runs at the same speed as the flier.

For method of attaching driving strings see book.

Driving Wheels for bobbin and flier are wooden discs with a groove round the edge.

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